

MEDIA RELEASE

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMITTED TO WORKING FOR A FAIR FUNDING ARRANGEMENT FOR ALL SECTORS

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), which met yesterday, remains committed to working with Minister Birmingham, the Federal Government, and the independent and government school sectors to ensure a fair distribution of funds for schools and school systems is achieved.

Acting executive director Ray Collins said “the NCEC has, over the years, enjoyed a positive working relationship with the independent sector and will continue to dialogue with them on an appropriate funding mechanism for non-government schools”.

“We also remain committed to the work of the National Resourcing Schools Board (NSRB) in its analysis of the use of SES as a determining factor in the funding of non-government schools,” he said.

Mr Collins said the concerns of the Catholic sector are due to the impact of the federal government’s educational reform that has resulted in harsh treatment for a significant number of Catholic schools.

“Our concerns have arisen as a result of the impact of the government's passage of the 2017 Education Act which provides very substantial additional funding to independent schools and reduces funding to some 600 Catholic schools, many of them parish primary schools,” he said.

“Catholic and other non-government school systems are treated harshly in contrast to most independent schools resulting in a loss of an estimated \$1.1 billion in funding to the Catholic sector over the next 10 years.

“The NCEC believes that all schools should receive some level of funding, however low fee charging Catholic and other non-government schools should not be treated the same as high fee charging schools in some areas of Australia,” he said.

“The commitment to operating a low fee charging system of schools is fundamental to the Catholic Church’s involvement in school education, enabling parents the right to have genuine choice in relation to the type of education they wish for their children.

“Failure to attend to the needs of non-government schools, including Catholic schools, which provide low cost alternatives for parents will have a disastrous effect in many areas of Australia.

“The possibility of some schools closing in parts of the nation is very real and the expectation of the NCEC is that the independent sector and the Catholic sector will be able to meet constructively with the Minister to address the concerns that have been raised,” said Mr Collins.